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ABSTRACT

Academic librarians who have faculty status must meet the same criteria for promotion and tenure as other faculty members, including doing research. However, library schools may not be training librarians adequately in the research skills required for entry level academic positions. In order to determine whether library schools in the United States meet their stated goals and objectives in regard to training librarians for entry level academic positions, the current catalogs of the 60 graduate library education programs in the United States accredited by the American Library Association as of October 1984 were examined. The goals and objectives stated in the catalogs were then compared to courses taught in research and statistical methods, as well as the availability of a thesis option. Results of the study indicate that most library schools do not meet their stated goals and objectives in training academic librarians in the area of research, and it is recommended that library schools require prior training in research methods and statistical techniques for admittance, or require future academic librarians to take such courses while in library school. Statistical information is presented in seven graphs, eight references are provided, and coded information from the library school bulletins is appended. (Author/KM)

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RESOLVED: LIBRARY SCHOOLS DO NOT MEET THEIR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN TRAINING ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS TO PERFORM RESEARCH

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Abstract. Since academic librarians have gained faculty status, they must meet the same criteria for promotion and tenure as other faculty members. These criteria include research together with job performance and service. Our position is that library schools in the United States do not meet their stated goals and objectives in regard to training librarians for entry level academic positions. Current library school catalogs are examined for their statements of goals and objectives and these are then compared to courses taught in research and statistical methods as well as the availability of a thesis option.

Key Words and Phrases. Academic Librarians; Library School Courses; Goals; Objectives; Research; Statistical Methods.

There has been much discussion in the past decade or two concerning whether or not librarians should be classified as faculty in academic institutions. That debate has pretty well been resolved. The "Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians,"[1] which was issued in 1974 asserts that librarians in academic institutions should have faculty status. By 1978 it had been endorsed by fifty-eight state and national library organizations.[2] How many academic librarians have faculty status? Surveys in the literature in 1981 and 1983 indicate that forty-four to forty-six percent of academic librarians have faculty status. We are not debating faculty status for librarians. The fact is that many are on the faculty--and if librarians are on the faculty, are they required to do research?

In order for faculty to be promoted in rank, to achieve tenure, and possibly to receive merit raises, they are frequently judged on the basis of three criteria: teaching, research, and service. Reports in the literature indicate that librarians given faculty status are often subject to the same criteria. The policy statements compiled by the Committee on Academic Status of ACRL indicate that evidence for promotion in rank may include activities related to inquiry and research.[3] For example, Thomas English, in a 1983 survey found that librarians with faculty status were required to meet two distinct sets of criteria. One set was designed to measure performance as librarians and the other set was designed to measure performance as faculty, that is, research, scholarly achievement, and publication.[4] Other surveys indicate that while for some librarians research is required, others are "encouraged" to publish.

Librarians have faculty status and are expected to do research. Whether it is required or encouraged, there is pressure to perform the task. Are academic librarians prepared to perform? Thomas Childers has reported "that the people who enter the library and information science profession are less than optimally skilled in and oriented to research."[5] If preparation for librarianship is based on a degree from a library school, what are library schools doing to prepare librarians? First of all, what are the schools' goals and objectives? Are they even attempting to train academic librarians? If not, we have no argument; if so, what are they doing to meet their stated goals and objectives? Are courses offered or required that teach research? Do they emphasize evaluation of research or performance? Are statistics courses available and do they teach performance? Is a thesis required or are independent study courses offered? What are the schools' admission requirements? If a research capability is required for admittance, there is no need to teach research.

METHODOLOGY

In order to answer these questions we decided to look at catalogs or bulletins of the sixty graduate library education programs in the United States accredited by the American Library Association as of October 1984. We wanted to determine whether library school courses carried out the schools' goals and objectives in relation to academic librarians and research. The information for each school was tabulated on a chart and the coded information from these charts was input into a microcomputer using PC File. Results were sorted and tabulated using the same program. Graphs were obtained using Lotus 1-2-3. A summary of the coded information from the bulletins is presented in Appendix I.

RESULTS

Our first question concerned admission standards and whether any kind of research experience was required. If that was the case, we didn't feel it was necessary for the school to teach research. For two schools: Southern Connecticut State University and University of California, Los Angeles, this was true. For the other fifty-eight we need to continue our quest.

Do the goals or objectives state or imply that academic librarians are trained? Forty-five schools, or seventy-five percent, make some statement in their bulletins to the effect that they train academic librarians. This is either stated explicitly or it is implied through statements that they train all librarians, beginning or entry level librarians, or provide

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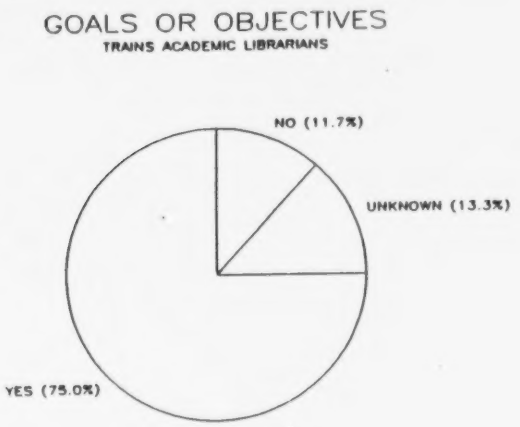
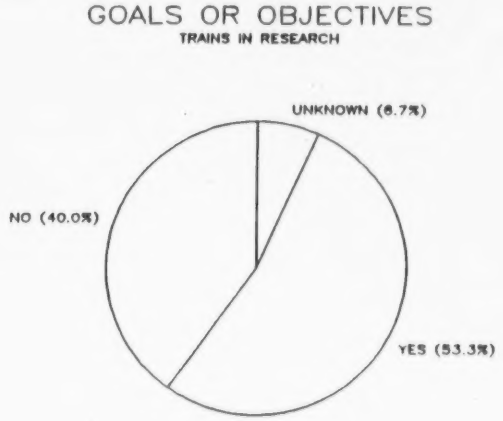
skills necessary for the profession. Graph 1 illustrates this. One might ask why all library schools do not state in some way that they train academic librarians. Perhaps they feel this is self evident and need not be stated.



GRAPH 1

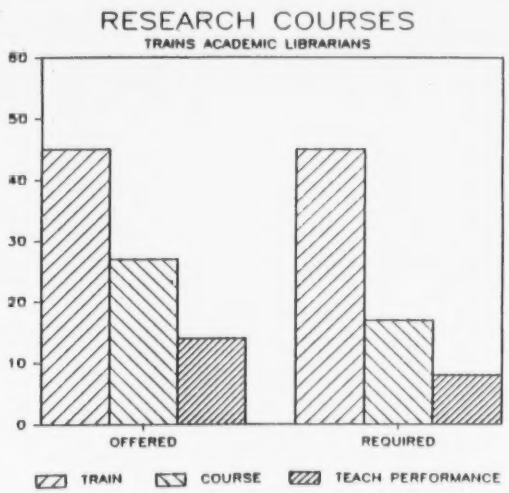
Are library schools committed by their goals or objectives to training librarians in the area of research? Graph 2 shows that slightly over half (53%) state that they are. If academic librarians are expected to do research and almost half the library schools do not see teaching research as one of their objectives, one must question whether these schools do train academic librarians.



GRAPH 2

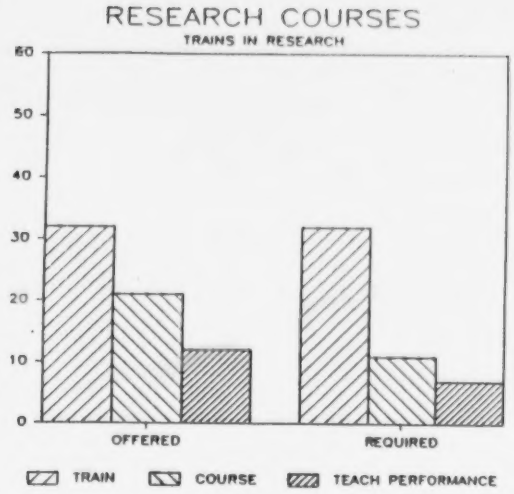
It is clear then that the goals and objectives of most library schools in the United States state or imply that academic librarians are trained while over half state that they train in the area of research. What do the schools do to accomplish their goals? How well do they fulfill their objectives? Are there courses offered to help train students in the areas of research and statistics? Thirty-five of the sixty schools, or fifty-eight percent, offer a course in research methods at the master's level, twenty-five do not. Of those thirty-five which offer a course, what is the content of that course? Promotion and tenure are based on performing research, which is quite different from evaluating what someone else has done. Almost half of the courses offered teach performance while the remainder either teach only evaluation or do not describe which aspect is taught. How much weight or importance do library schools give these courses? One way to determine this might be to consider whether or not a research course is required. Only twenty-three of the thirty-five schools which offer a research course require that it be taken. Of those only eleven teach performance.

The most interesting results are obtained when the schools' goals and objectives are compared to what they offer. Graph 3 shows a comparison of the forty-five schools which claim to train academic librarians with whether research courses are offered or required and whether or not those courses teach performance. Twenty-seven offer a research course, fourteen of which teach performance. Only seventeen require the course, of which eight teach performance.



GRAPH 3

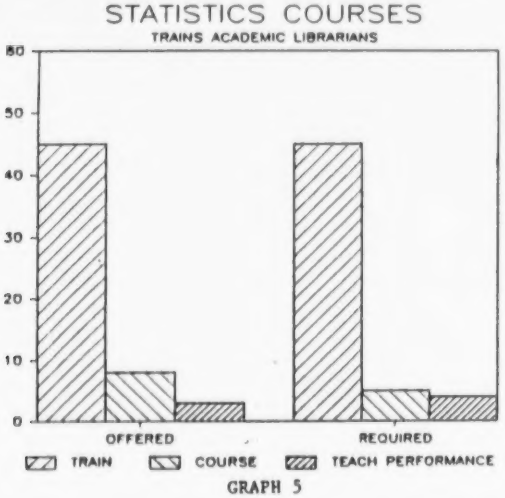
Looking at those whose goal or objective is to train in the area of research, Graph 4 illustrates the relationship of courses which are offered or required as well as whether the course requires performance. Of the thirty-two schools which train in research, twenty-one offer a course in research, twelve of which teach performance. Only eleven require the course, seven of which teach performance.



GRAPH 4

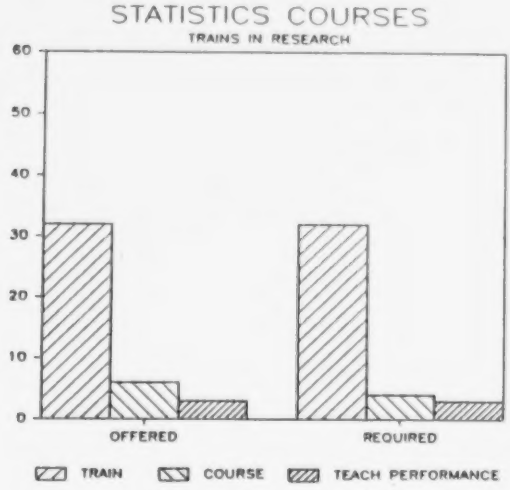
A necessary component of much research is the ability to create and use statistics. One might reason that a course in statistics would be preferable to one in research methods--or at least should be offered in addition to research methods courses. Statistics courses are almost as elusive as Clara Peller's famous "beef." Only eleven schools, or eighteen percent, even offer courses in statistical methods. Of those, four teach performance, four teach evaluation, and three do not describe which aspect they teach. Of the eleven schools that offer a statistics course, only, six, or ten percent of the sixty, require the course to be taken.

Again, we think it is important to compare the schools' intentions with what they offer. Of the forty-five schools which claim to train academic librarians, eight offer a course in statistics, three of which teach performance. Only five schools require the course. This comparison is shown in Graph 5.



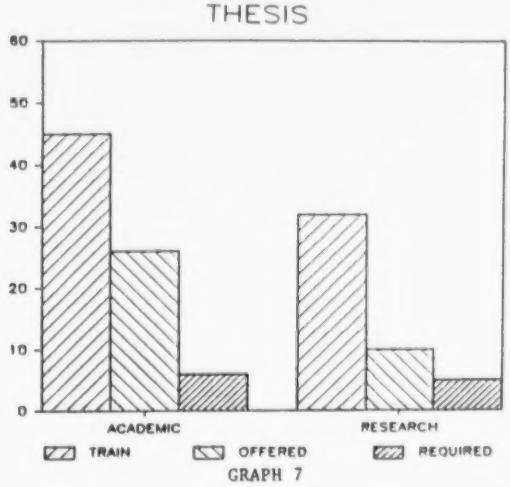
GRAPH 5

Graph 6 covers those thirty-two schools which claim to train in research. Only six offer a course in statistics, and of those six only three teach performance. Of the same thirty-two schools only four require a course and of these four, three teach performance.



GRAPH 6

We would like to make two more short comparisons before we state our conclusions. It is possible that if a school requires a thesis, librarians would get experience in research in library school. So, let's examine those institutions which state that they train academic librarians and train in research. Graph 7 illustrates first that of the forty-five schools which claim to train academic librarians twenty-six do offer a thesis option but only six require it. As for the thirty-two schools which claim to train in the area of research, only ten offer a thesis, and only five require it. Requiring a thesis would provide research experience irrespective of other courses offered.



GRAPH 7

CONCLUSION

It is clear to us that some few library schools accomplish their goals and fulfull their objectives laudably. However, most library schools do not meet their stated goals and objectives in training academic librarians in the area of research. Library schools should critically examine whether the programs offered meet their goals and objectives and if they do not, they should either re-state their goals or change their programs. Either library schools should require prior training in research methods and statistical techniques for admittance or persons entering the field of academic librarianship should be required to take such courses while in library school. These courses could be offered in the graduate library school or obtained in another area of the college or university. Librarians would then be equipped to work in an academic environment and would be better able to support the role of colleges and universities in their research endeavors and to accomplish those pursuits expected of faculty members.

Academic librarians are entering the profession with almost no experience in a growing aspect of their jobs. Where will they get this experience? Who will take the first step? Beverly Lynch has stated that "the role of the academic librarian being forged in the field is not yet the role adopted by those teaching in library schools."[6] Library schools should be the leaders and not the followers in preparing academic librarians.

Some library schools are aware of the problem and are taking action now. Here are two things that are already being done. The March 15, 1985 Library Hotline reported that the University of Michigan School of Library Science is going to a two year degree with more emphasis on such things as quantitative analysis in order to help students who are going to work in research libraries.[7] Another thing that would be very helpful to students is a statement such as is in the Kent State University library school bulletin: "A thesis is strongly recommended for students preparing to work in academic libraries. Large university libraries, in particular, often require that prospective employees submit evidence of research capability."[8]

Academic librarians need to understand and be prepared for the realities of academe. It would be well for library students anticipating careers in academic institutions to look closely at courses provided by library schools and choose that school which offers the best preparation--and it would be well for library schools to make sure that their curriculums meet their stated goals and objectives.

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6. Lynch, Beverly P., "A Comment on the Role of the Academic Librarian," Journal of Academic Librarianship 4 (July 1978): 134.

7. Library Hotline 14, no. 11 (18 March 1985): 5.

8. Introducing Library Science 1983-1985, Kent State. (Kent, Ohio: School of Library Science, Kent State University), p. 7.

APPENDIX I

Coded Information from Bulletins

1 = Identification number of institution: (60 institutions)

2 = Do admission standards require a research methods course or statistical methods course?
1 = yes: 2 (2%), 2 = no: 55 (92%), 3 = unknown: 3 (5%)

3 = Goals and objectives

3.1 = Goals or objectives state or imply that academic librarians are trained: e.g., train all librarians, train beginning or entry level librarians, train academic librarians, provide skills necessary for the profession
1 = yes: 45 (75%), 2 = no: 7 (12%),
3 = unknown: 8 (13%)

3.2 = Goals or objectives state they train librarians in the area of research
1 = yes: 32 (53%), 2 = no: 24 (40%),
3 = unknown: 4 (7%)

4 = Thesis program offered or master's report
1 = yes, not required: 27 (45%), 2 = yes, required: 7 (11.7%), 3 = no: 25 (41.7%),
4 = unknown: 1 (1.7%)

5 = Courses

5.1 = Required courses require a course on research methods
1 = Course teaches evaluation of research: 9 (15%)
2 = Course teaches performance of research: 7 (11.7%)

3 = Course teaches both evaluation and performance: 4 (6.7%)
4 = Course does not describe which aspect: 3 (5%)
5 = No course required: 37 (61.7%)

5.2 = Required courses require a course on statistical methods
1 = Course teaches evaluation of statistics: 1 (1.7%)
2 = Course teaches performance using statistics: 3 (5%)
3 = Course teaches both evaluation and performance: 1 (1.7%)
4 = Course does not describe which aspect: 1 (1.7%)
5 = No course required: 54 (90%)

5.3 = Independent study course offered
1 = yes: 36 (60%), 2 = no: 24 (40%)

5.4 = Course in research methods offered at the master's level but not required
1 = Course teaches evaluation of research: 11 (18.3%)
2 = Course teaches performance of research: 8 (13.3%)
3 = Course teaches both evaluation and performance: 9 (15%)
4 = Course does not describe which aspect: 7 (11.7%)
5 = No course offered: 25 (41.7%)

5.5 = Course in statistical methods offered at the master's level but not required
1 = Course teaches evaluation of statistical methods: 4 (6.7%)
2 = Course teaches performance using statistics: 4 (6.7%)
3 = Course teaches both evaluation and performance: 0 (0%)
4 = Course does not describe which aspect: 3 (5%)
5 = No course offered: 49 (81.7%)